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PRESS RELEASE

DATE/TIME OF RELEASE: 3/ 4/ 2001 4:00 p.m.
DATE/TIME OF OCCURRENCE: 3/ 4/ 2001 11:45 a.m.
NATURE OF CALL: Search and Rescue
LOCATION OF CALL: Squaw Valley Ski Resort
CASE NUMBER: SO-01- 3691
RELEASED BY: Sgt. Jeffrey Granum

SHERIFF EDWARD N. BONNER RELEASES THE FOLLOWING:

On 3/ 4/ 01 at about 11:45 a.m., Craig Noble, a Squaw Valley Ski Corp. patroller was notified of two ski tracks leading out of bounds from the south side of the KT-22 run. This area is privately owned and is posted "Permanently Closed". The signage also indicates that it is a ski area boundary.

Noble followed the tracks south bound towards the Five Lakes Trailhead at Alpine Meadows and saw they led to a cornice. The tracks then seemed to lead to a snow debris area below the cornice where a recent avalanche had occurred. The unstable terrain broke loose again as Noble was surveying the area.

Squaw Valley Ski Corp. immediately sent about sixty-five ski patrol searchers to the area and closed the KT-22 chair lift. Placer County Sheriff's Department was called to coordinate the search and rescue operation involving the Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team and patrollers from both Squaw Valley Ski Corp. and Alpine Meadows.

Search and rescue workers on the Alpine Meadows side to the south did not see tracks leading out from the area. Searchers used avalanche rescue dogs and probes to check the area described as the "East Gully". This is the same area where two seventeen year olds tragically lost their lives the week before in similar circumstances.

The search of the area was concluded at about 2:30 p.m. with a 96% probability of detection, but without locating any victims or survivors. As of 4:00 p.m. there were no reports of missing persons and the search operation was suspended pending further developments.

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